

VZCZCXRO1132  
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM  
DE RUEHBK #3104/01 3430805  
ZNY SSSSS ZZH  
O 090805Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9226  
INFO RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZA/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7760  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0233  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 6030  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2158  
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0225  
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 7373

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003104

SIPDIS

NSC FOR WALTON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/18/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TH](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: SOUTHERN THAILAND: INSURGENTS WELCOME MALAYSIAN PM  
NAJIB'S VISIT WITH BOMBS, BANNERS

REF: A. BANGKOK 2792: MALAYSIAN PM NAJIB TALKS AUTONOMY

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 2955: SOUTHERN THAILAND: A VIOLENT WEEK

BANGKOK 00003104 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DCM JAMES F. ENTWISTLE, REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Rajak's joint visit with Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva to southern Thailand on December 9, ostensibly to promote Malaysia's support for peaceful resolution to the unrest in the border provinces, was marred by multiple insurgent attacks elsewhere in the three affected provinces, along with banners to the effect that "the fight must go on." The explosions wounded approximately ten, mainly soldiers. Najib's visit had already generated lively public discussion about the insurgency and the lack of success under the Abhisit government, now in office for a year, to quell the violence. In the run-up to Najib's visit, Thai security forces in Narathiwat province on December 5 uncovered a bomb-making factory capable of making about twenty bombs and arresting two people.

[1](#)2. (S) Comment: Thai officials welcome Najib's publicly stated support for the Thai government's efforts to bring peace and stability to the Deep South and the Malaysian leader's blunt message to southern Malay Muslims that they should see their future as Thai citizens, as a counter to separatist ideology. The public messaging makes up in part for Najib's late October rhetorical misstep when he said the three southernmost provinces should have some form of autonomy (REF A). Insurgent activity in Narathiwat and Yala provinces during the visit highlight the determination of some insurgents to keep fighting, regardless of Thai-Malaysian public cooperation on the one hand, and ongoing secret negotiations fostered by the Henri Dunant Centre (HDC) on the other. The attacks also underscore the difficulty in negotiating with an insurgency that thus far has not revealed a coherent, unified leadership, but has shown a willingness to carry out violent acts without stating explicit goals. At least some elements of the insurgent movement currently in HDC-facilitated negotiations harbor deep suspicions of Malaysian government intent, several participants in the talks have indicated to us (SEPTEL). We will meet with our Malaysian counterparts early next week to get their perspective on Najib's visit. End Summary and

Comment.

NAJIB'S VISIT HAILED BY EXPLOSIONS IN NARATHIWAT...

-----

13. (U) Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak and Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva flew to Narathiwat Province December 9. The first order of business was a ceremony renaming a bridge between Thailand and Malaysia, followed by a visit to a local Islamic school and a new village built under the auspices of one of the Queen's projects. Najib had several meetings in Bangkok December 8, publicly reiterating Malaysia's support for Thailand in seeking a peaceful solution to the violence that since 2004 has claimed over 3,500 lives in Thailand's southernmost provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and portions of Songkhla. The International Crisis Group (ICG) took advantage of Najib's visit to release its latest report on southern Thailand, criticizing the lack of results during the first year of the Abhisit administration, and to recommend that the RTG seek a genuine political solution by negotiating directly with the insurgents.

14. (C) On the morning of December 9, militants attacked a military patrol clearing the motorcade route in Yi-ngo District of Narathiwat Province, one of a string of attacks across the south greeting the two Premiers. Human Rights Watch researcher Sunai Phasuk told us that insurgents had conducted multiple bomb and shooting attacks across the South on December 9, resulting in injuries to up to ten soldiers. Don Pathan, a reporter for The Nation newspaper and regular Embassy contact, said Major General Chamlong Khunsong confirmed bomb attacks in Bacho District of Narathiwat Province, but said they were not along the delegations'

BANGKOK 00003104 002.2 OF 002

planned travel route. Government spokesman Panitan Wattanayagorn played down reports that the bombings elsewhere forced changes in the PMs' schedule; he told us the delay in leaving for the Friendship bridge ceremony was the result of the Malaysian side running a bit behind schedule.

...AND IN YALA, MORE BOMBS, FAKE BOMBS, AND SIGNS

-----

15. (C) Thai-language press reported December 9 that several fake bombs had been found along roads in Yala Province, allegedly planted by insurgents. Don Pathan told us that his contacts in Yala Province reported four bombs exploding in Yala on December 9, but no one was seriously injured. He also said there were signs scattered all over the region that said "Patani is part of Malaysia" written in both Jawi and Rumi. Thai-language press reported signs posted along roadways in Yala that said in Jawi, "We will fight to the death for our rights." As is normal in the South, no groups or individuals claimed credit for the bombs or the signs; Don Pathan told us Pattani Senator Worawit Baru had told him that anyone who wanted to create some discomfort for the delegation could be responsible. Human Rights Watch researcher Sunai told us that the attacks sent a coordinated message from the insurgents that they will keep fighting, as indicated by banners with similar slogans seen in all three of the Deep South provinces.

BOMB FACTORY UNCOVERED IN NARATHIWAT

-----

16. (C) This latest round of apparently coordinated attacks comes on the heels of a significant find by Thai security forces. Sunai told us that RTA Taskforce 38 was conducting a search operation December 5 when they found a bomb factory in Narathiwat Province. In addition to detaining two suspected insurgents, soldiers collected bomb-making materials, including C4 and Power Gel explosives, PVC pipes, metal pipes packed with explosives, detonation circuits, fire extinguisher canisters, nitrate fertilizer, gasoline, mobile

phones, alarm clocks, and other items commonly used for IEDs in southern Thailand. The factory had the capacity to make about 20 bombs, according to Sunai.

JOHN